

The President's Daily Brief

25 November 1970

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

Yesterday's SALT talks are discussed on Page 1.

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[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Guinea. (Page 2)

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A Burmese official says that U Nu will initiate action against Ne Win's government early next year. (Page 3)

North Vietnamese infiltration seems likely to total 20,000 for November. (Page 4)

Hanoi is having problems with its propaganda response to the US air rescue effort. (Page 5)

Communist China [REDACTED]
(Page 6)

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The Soviets orbited another unmanned spacecraft yesterday. (Page 6)

Fedayeen groups are to meet today in Amman. (Page 6)

The Soviet sub tender is back in Cienfuegos. (Page 7)

Both Egypt and Israel are now conducting overflights in the Suez Canal area. (Page 7)

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*FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY**SALT*

At yesterday's session in Helsinki, Semenov continued to pick away at the US proposal of 4 August. He addressed some of the "corollary measures" suggested by the US to facilitate verification, and contended that these were unnecessarily stringent. The US plan, for example, would ban the relocation of land-based ICBM launchers and their modification in externally observable ways. Semenov argued that this would result in banning any modernization programs which can be discovered and verified by "national means."

Semenov's commentary on the US proposal seems to be slowly grinding to a close. In private conversations the Soviets have already raised the question of when to resume in Vienna after this Helsinki round. Two of the Russian delegates have let it be known they consider resumption before next spring to be unlikely.

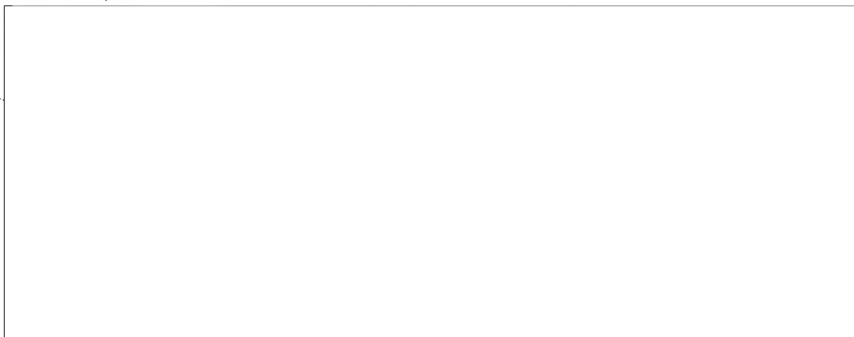
The Soviets are missing no opportunity to attack US unwillingness to discuss forward-based systems (FBS), and show no signs of relenting. One of the Soviet delegates privately told Ambassador Parsons yesterday that the US concern over Cuba showed Washington to be as sensitive to FBS as Moscow is.

Last week Ambassador Dobrynin had put it bluntly when he told Ambassador Thompson that FBS seems to be the "main issue" at the SALT talks, and that the Soviet military has been particularly insistent that FBS be included in the discussions. Dobrynin was doubtful that agreements would be reached at Helsinki.

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GUINEA

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Activity in Conakry began reverting to normal yesterday although scattered shooting persisted, apparently resulting from the efforts of government patrols to flush out remnants of the invaders. It now appears that some commandos remained on shore for only a few hours and that the bulk of them returned to their ships by the second day, although a few were killed or captured.

It seems increasingly likely that the invading force included both whites and natives of Portuguese Guinea hostile to the rebels there. Some of them are almost certainly still at large in Conakry, along with some of the non-Portuguese prisoners freed.

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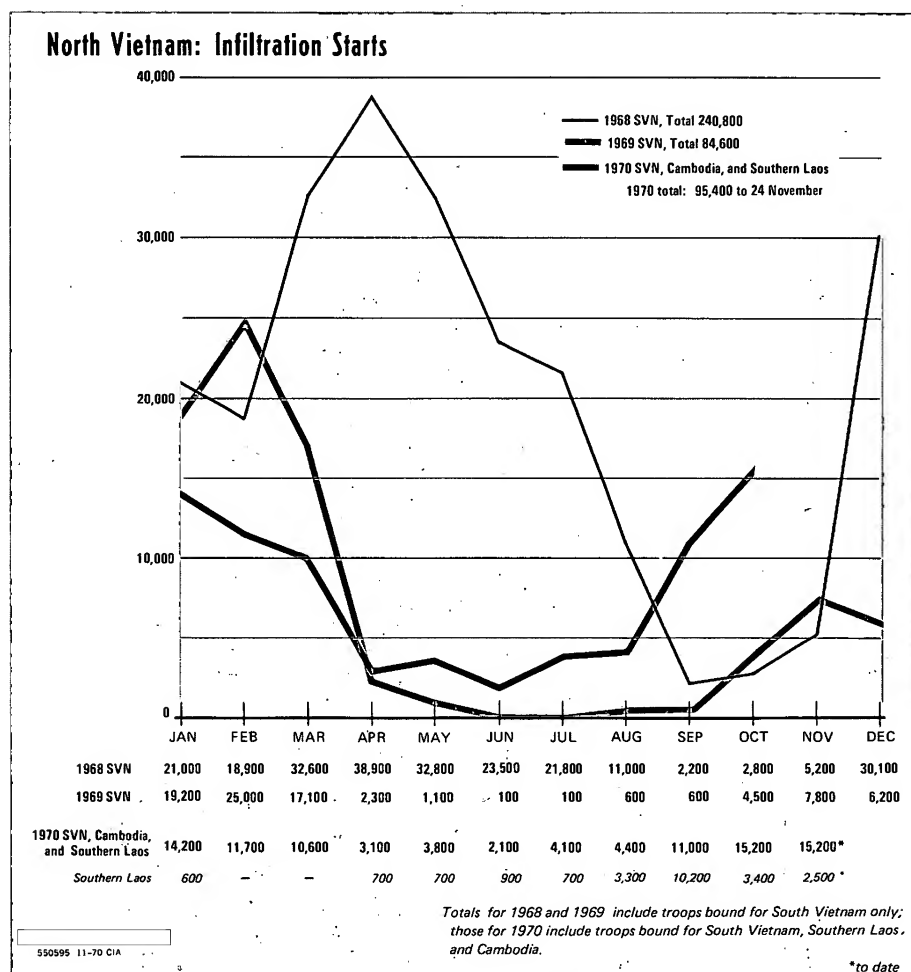
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BURMA

The Burmese military attaché in Bangkok has told his American counterpart that exile forces of former prime minister U Nu plan to begin military action against the Ne Win regime around the first of the year. Military probes from Thai bases by a 1,000-man force would be complemented by Karen and Mon tribal sympathizers living along the Thai-Burmese border. The attaché said that Burma is readying its military forces along the border and is confident of repelling any military adventures. He added that U Nu's group is known to have made arms purchases recently, and he reiterated Burmese knowledge of Thai Government complicity in the ex - prime minister's activities.

The Burmese obviously are getting more upset about U Nu's campaign to unseat Ne Win, which to date has been a rather half-baked affair. Although U Nu has been buying weapons, we have no evidence to confirm the allegation that he plans to launch operations soon. Rangoon, although not worried about an early military threat, is concerned that the appearance of his forces inside Burma would increase his appeal to the disaffected Burmese populace.

The purpose of the Burmese attaché in passing this information may have been to discourage any US contacts with U Nu. Although Rangoon has accepted US assurances of noninvolvement, some Burmese officials have been telling third parties that the opposite is true. The Rangoon press has noted Bangkok's association with the exile movement, and the Burmese may also hope that the attaché's remarks will get back to the Thai and discourage their support of U Nu.



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NORTH VIETNAM

Some 4,500 troops started southward during the past week, bringing the total being infiltrated so far in November to around 15,200. About 10,000 of these are going to the COSVN area which covers southern South Vietnam and Cambodia. Another 2,700 are earmarked for northern South Vietnam and 2,500 more--including what appears to be an integral regiment--are most likely en route to southern Laos.

November infiltration will reach about 20,000 if the present rate continues. This would be the highest monthly total since February 1969, when 25,000 set out.

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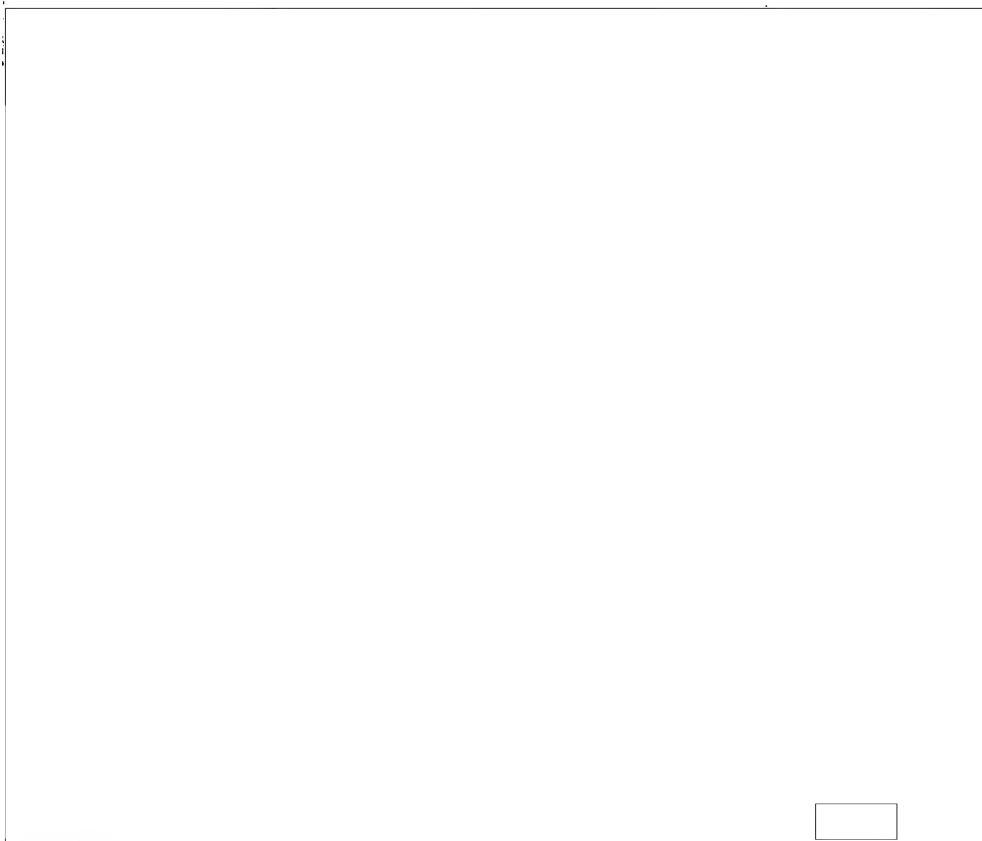
NORTH VIETNAM

A Foreign Ministry statement about the US operation to rescue captured airmen was ordered held in abeyance yesterday shortly after being transmitted to foreign outlets of the North Vietnamese news agency. The statement, although calling Secretary Laird's disclosure a fabrication to cover widespread US air raids well above the 19th parallel, was on the whole mild and lacking in threats of military retaliation or of a break in the Paris talks. The news agencies were ordered to await another statement, but no second statement is available and, as of early this morning, Hanoi has not yet released the original Foreign Ministry response.

North Vietnam's international news service has, however, broadcast an unattributed commentary published today in the Communist Party's daily newspaper. Like Hanoi's initial response to the air attacks, this commentary avoided the issue of whether a rescue effort had actually occurred and stated only that the US had attacked a prisoner of war installation. The weekend raids were characterized as "extremely serious" but no unusual reactions were threatened.

Delay in releasing a Foreign Ministry statement and the guarded approach to the rescue mission suggest that Hanoi has been having some difficulty in formulating an appropriate response. Hanoi's dilemma apparently stems from its desire to condemn the action without acknowledging that US forces were able to move in and out of North Vietnamese territory with impunity.

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NOTES

Communist China:

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USSR: An unmanned Soyuz spacecraft was orbited from Tyuratam yesterday morning. [redacted], labeled Cosmos 379 by TASS, [redacted]

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The purpose of this flight may be to test modifications to the spacecraft, possibly in preparation for a new phase of the Soyuz manned space program.

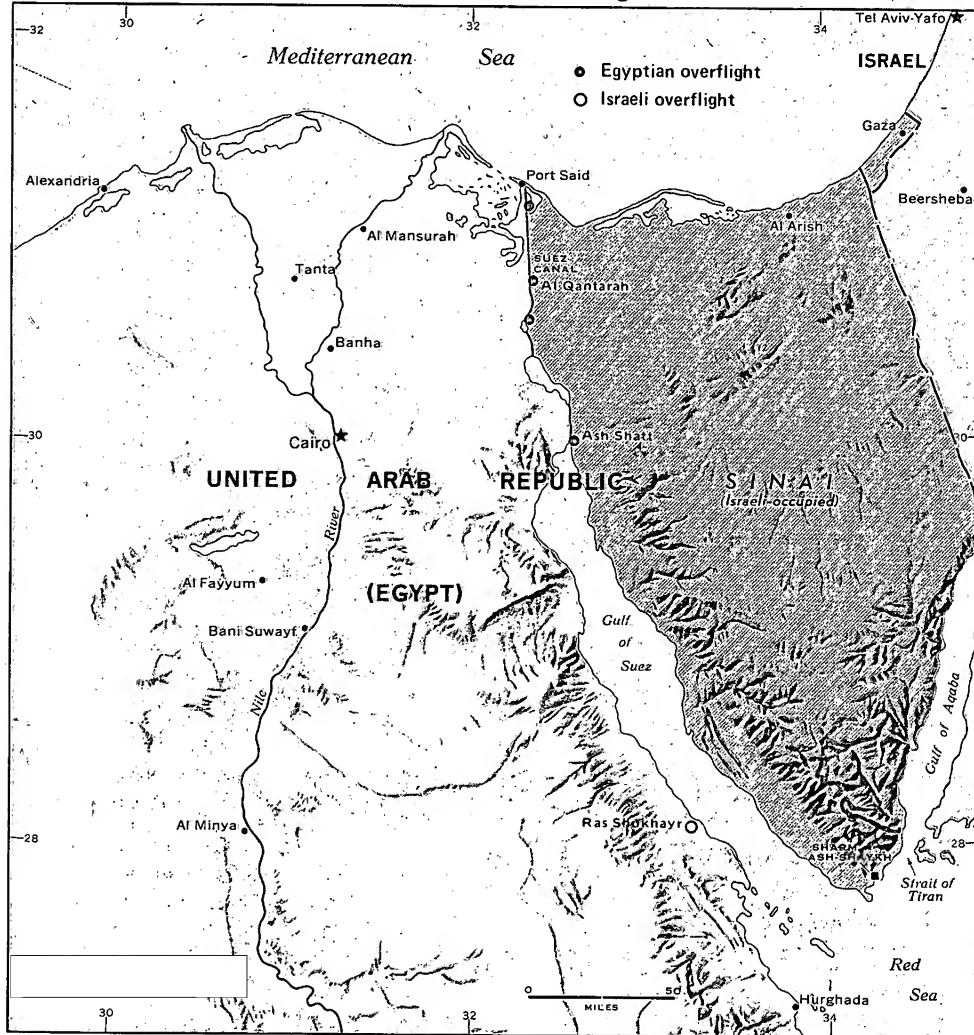
Fedayeen-Jordan: Representatives from various Palestine commando organizations are scheduled to meet today in Amman to discuss the merger of all fedayeen groups into a single Palestine Liberation Front. The meeting has already been postponed once because of the disarray among fedayeen leaders [redacted]

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(continued)

Egyptian and Israeli Reconnaissance Overflights

22-24 November



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USSR-Cuba: The Soviet submarine tender returned to Cienfuegos yesterday afternoon following a five-day stay in the nearby port of Casilda. In the Atlantic, a Soviet guided-missile frigate and an oiler are 1,300 miles southwest of the Azores, headed toward the Caribbean. [REDACTED] a Soviet C-class nuclear attack submarine may be accompanying these two ships.

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Egypt-Israel: Egyptian reconnaissance flights over the east bank of the Suez Canal were conducted on 22 and 23 November for the first time since the cease-fire began in early August. These missions have elicited Israeli complaints of cease-fire violations despite the fact that the Israelis conduct fairly regular overflights of Egyptian territory--the most recent of which occurred yesterday.

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